

House File 285 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 285

BY WATTS

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to intellectual diversity in community colleges
2 and institutions of higher education under the control
3 of the state board of regents and providing a reporting
4 requirement.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. 261G.1 Short title — definition.

2 1. This chapter may be cited as the "*Intellectual Diversity*
3 *in Higher Education Act*".

4 2. For purposes of this chapter, unless the context
5 otherwise requires, "*intellectual diversity*" means an open
6 learning environment that exposes students to a variety of
7 perspectives.

8 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. 261G.2 Reporting requirements.

9 1. Each community college established under chapter 260C
10 and each institution of higher education under the control of
11 the state board of regents shall, on or before January 1, 2012,
12 and on or before January 1 of each succeeding fiscal year, do
13 the following:

14 a. Submit a report to the Iowa association of community
15 college trustees or the state board of regents, as appropriate,
16 detailing the steps that the community college or institution
17 has taken and is taking to ensure intellectual diversity and
18 the free exchange of ideas among both the student body and the
19 faculty members.

20 b. Post the report described in paragraph "a" on the
21 community college's or institution's internet website.

22 c. Create a mechanism to receive complaints and suggestions
23 from students, faculty, and other interested parties regarding
24 intellectual diversity, or lack thereof, at the community
25 college or institution.

26 2. In order to fulfill the reporting requirement
27 in subsection 1, on or before December 30 annually, as
28 appropriate, beginning December 30, 2011, each community
29 college and each institution of higher education under the
30 control of the state board of regents shall at a minimum do the
31 following:

32 a. Conduct a study to assess the current state of
33 intellectual diversity on its campus.

34 b. Incorporate intellectual diversity into institutional
35 statements, grievance procedures, and activities that promote

1 diversity.

2 *c.* Include intellectual diversity concerns in the community
3 college's or institution's guidelines on teaching and program
4 development.

5 *d.* Include intellectual diversity issues in student
6 discourse evaluations.

7 *e.* Develop clear policies on hiring, tenure, and promotion
8 that protect individuals against discrimination based on
9 political viewpoint and that track any reported political
10 viewpoint discrimination grievances.

11 *f.* Direct the chief diversity officer for the community
12 college or institution, or other parties responsible for
13 diversity efforts at the community college or institution,
14 to ensure that the community college or institution take
15 all appropriate measures to promote intellectual diversity,
16 including but not limited to the provisions specified in this
17 subsection. The chief diversity officer or other parties
18 responsible for diversity efforts at the community college
19 or institution shall also report regularly on intellectual
20 diversity to the Iowa association of community college trustees
21 or the state board of regents, as appropriate.

22 3. On or before January 31 annually, beginning January
23 31, 2012, the Iowa association of community college trustees
24 for the community colleges, and the state board of regents
25 for the institutions of higher education it controls, shall
26 collect and summarize the reports provided in accordance with
27 subsection 1, and submit the summary in a report to the general
28 assembly and the governor. The summary report shall provide
29 internet website links to the complete reports provided by the
30 institutions in accordance with subsection 1, along with the
31 key findings derived from those reports. The Iowa association
32 of community college trustees and state board of regents shall
33 each maintain a copy of the summary report and copies of the
34 reports provided pursuant to subsection 1 on its internet
35 website.

1 4. The standing senate and house of representatives
2 education committees of the general assembly shall hear
3 testimony from representatives of the community colleges and
4 the institutions of higher education under the control of the
5 state board of regents; their students, faculty members, and
6 administrators; and expert witnesses concerning the reports
7 submitted pursuant to this section and any matters of interest
8 to the committees concerning intellectual diversity.

9

EXPLANATION

10 This bill establishes the "Intellectual Diversity in Higher
11 Education Act", requires each community college and regents
12 university to provide an annual report to the Iowa association
13 of community college trustees and the state board of regents,
14 as appropriate, describing the steps it is taking to ensure
15 intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas. The
16 association and the state board are directed to submit a
17 summary of the reports to the general assembly and the governor
18 annually and to place the summary report and the institution
19 reports on their internet websites.

20 The bill defines "intellectual diversity" as an open
21 learning environment that exposes students to a variety of
22 perspectives.

23 Each community college and regents university must
24 submit its report on or before January 1 annually beginning
25 January 1, 2012, post the reports on their websites, and
26 create a mechanism to collect complaints and suggestions
27 related to intellectual diversity. In order to fulfill the
28 reporting requirement, on or before December 30 annually,
29 beginning December 30, 2011, each community college and
30 regents university must, at a minimum, conduct a study to
31 assess the current state of intellectual diversity on its
32 campus; incorporate intellectual diversity into institutional
33 statements, grievance procedures, and activities that promote
34 diversity; include intellectual diversity concerns in the
35 institution's guidelines on teaching and program development;

1 and include intellectual diversity issues in student discourse
2 evaluations; develop clear policies on hiring, tenure, and
3 promotion that protect individuals against discrimination
4 based on political viewpoint and that track discrimination
5 grievances.

6 The summary reports must be submitted to the general
7 assembly and the governor on or before January 31, 2012, and
8 annually thereafter. The summary report must include the key
9 findings derived from the institutions' reports.

10 Finally, the bill provides that the standing senate and
11 house of representatives education committees shall hear
12 testimony from community college and regents university
13 representatives, students, faculty members, administrators,
14 and expert witnesses concerning the reports submitted and any
15 matters of interest to the committees concerning intellectual
16 diversity.